



Arizona Department of Public Safety

- For Immediate Release -

Friday, February 6, 2009

Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force seizes large commercial vehicle chop shop in Snowflake

Four semi-tractors and eleven semi-trailers seized; two arrests made

On January 24, 2009, as part of Operation Big Rig II, a search warrant was executed at a property outside of Snowflake, Ariz. This resulted in the seizure of two semi-tractors, seven semi-trailers, a Caterpillar 920 loader, and eight major component parts. One of the semi-trailers contained \$200,000 worth of brand new industrial ice machines. On January 25, 2009, a second search warrant was served at a business in Snowflake which resulted in the seizure of two semi-tractors, one semi-trailer, four major component parts and chop shop tools. Three more stolen semi-trailers were recovered from the Snowflake property between January 25 and February 4.

On February 4, 2009, the Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force which is administered by the Arizona Department of Public Safety executed two additional search warrants in Apache Junction and Mesa related to this ongoing investigation. More evidence was seized linking two suspects to the 15 stolen semi-tractors and their organized operation of a large scale chop shop.

This is an ongoing investigation. Possible charges include auto theft and operating a chop shop

“This is the largest seizure of a commercial vehicle chop shop since the Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force began operating. DPS is proud to coordinate the efforts of this task force and we applaud the excellent police work that resulted in these arrests,” said Roger Vanderpool, director of the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

photos available upon request

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Press Inquiries:

PO BOX 6638 | Phoenix, AZ 85005-6638 | azdps.gov | pio@azdps.gov